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the close of the previous essay; there is not a single iota cleared up. At best, we have been shown, by one example, how it can *not* be cleared up.

We are told in the *Theaitetos* of Plato, in connection with that movement, to which Hegel compared the negativity, concerning the disciples of the profound Herakleitos:—"About these speculations of Herakleitos which, as you say, are as old as Homer, or even older still, the Ephesians themselves, who profess to know them, are downright mad, and you cannot talk with them about them. For, in accordance with their text-books, they are always in motion; but as for dwelling upon an argument or a question, and quietly asking and answering in turn, they are absolutely without the power of doing this; or, rather, they have no particle of rest in them, and they are in a state of negation of rest which no words can express. If you ask any one of them a question, he will produce, as from a quiver, sayings brief and dark, and shoot them at you; and if you inquire the reason of what he has said, you will be hit by some other new-fangled word, and *will make no way with any of them, nor they with one another.*"

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

By D. J. SNIDER.

[*Conclusion of the Article in the April number.*]

In a late number of the Journal there was a partial analysis of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice." We now propose to complete that criticism by extending it to other parts of the same drama. But first it will be well to recapitulate the results arrived at in the former essay. Only the leading collision of the play was there developed, that between Shylock and Antonio. The first characteristic to be observed in respect to these two characters is that the one was a Jew and the other a Christian; hence the historical collision involved in the drama was between the Hebrew and the modern world. But, in the second place, this collision was elevated from a merely natural to a spiritual basis by the ends which these two men proposed; that of Shylock being the acquisition of

gain, in general Thrift; while that of Antonio, though he was a merchant, subordinated money to higher purposes. In the third place, Shylock's end—Property—is absolutely confirmed and protected by Law, which possesses objective validity, and cannot be assailed with impunity. With this mighty principle Antonio falls into conflict by his bond, for bonds and all contracts must be held sacred if property be protected. Hence Law enforces Shylock's end and seizes upon Antonio. But Formal Law manifests its limitation through its own self-contradiction and thus annuls itself,—this is the point made by Portia in her celebrated defence whereby Antonio is saved. But this result cannot be final, for it is purely negative and terminates in the annulment of Law; hence we pass to a higher principle which takes up and harmonizes within itself the negation before mentioned, namely, the principle of Mercy, which in its turn saves the Jew. When Law becomes self-contradictory, annihilates its own end, destroys that which it was made to protect, there must be some way of abating its action, and this is accomplished by a system of mercy. But let it not be forgotten that within its own sphere Law is paramount, and cannot be interfered with from any quarter. The reason why the Jew does not perish, though he has willed and tried to commit murder, is that he was the real object of mercy, since he was arraigned for subjective intention which lay outside of his consciousness. Hence he was in truth not responsible. Nor could the court and Portia reasonably condemn the Jew after they had maintained the cause of mercy with such persistency and power. It would be a flagrant inconsistency to demand that for Antonio which they the next moment refuse to Shylock. Hence the piece is not a tragedy. Moreover, it will be seen at the very outset that this play, if it be true to thought and history, cannot have a tragic termination. Christianity has triumphed in the world, and its representative, who is here Antonio, cannot perish in such a conflict. Nor can the Jew suffer death at the hands of Christians, for their doctrine is forgiveness and mercy. Hence the difficulty must be mediated. But who is to perform the act of mediation? This question brings us to the third leading character of the drama—Portia.

But before we go on let us speak of a possible misunderstanding. By the foregoing remarks, or in the previous essay, it is not meant to assert or to be implied that the Jews of the present day are Shylocks. On the contrary, they have risen out of the narrow limits of nationality and religion as completely as any other people. No one can deny them their full share of the culture, liberality and genius of modern times. Nor is the historical position of this nationality to be underestimated. It has certainly contributed the largest ingredient to our modern civilization, and it alone of all world-historical peoples of antiquity is in existence to-day. Shylock, however, represents the ancient Hebrew, with all his peculiarities, cast into the modern world. He is the product of two influences: first, the original Jewish character; secondly, that character in a strange land, persecuted and outlawed by society. Hence the bitterness which overflows his whole existence, and poisons not merely his social relations, but his own domestic hearth. In America these external restraints are removed, there is hardly a prejudice except what is imported, and no one would think of distinguishing in any public relation the Jews from the common body of citizens.

But to resume. Portia is the third great character of the play, and in importance stands quite on a par with Antonio and Shylock. Her function is mediatorial; in fact, she may be called the grand mediatrix of the entire drama. In her we see the instrumentality by which the main results are brought about. Through her courtship with Bassanio, Antonio comes into the power of the Jew by means of the loan. At her house all the personages of the play assemble and the wooing is done. Moreover, she accomplishes the rescue of Antonio, which is the main mediation of the poem. The great principle of which she is the bearer may be termed the Right of Subjectivity. She asserts the validity of the Internal and the Spiritual against the crushing might of externality. But she does not deny the Right of the Objective in its true limitation. Only when this Objective becomes destructive of its end and self-contradictory, as in the case when the Law was about to murder Antonio, does she place a limit to it and invoke a higher principle. Her struggle is with legality and proscription asserting themselves in spheres where they do

not belong. But in relations when this contradiction no longer appears, she is the most ethical of women. In the Family her subordination is complete, almost devout. In fact, we shall see that all her acts have one end and one impelling motive: devotion to her husband, an absolute unity with his feelings and interests; in other words, subordination to the Family. She vindicates the Right of Subjectivity to herself in order that she may obtain the one whom she really loves, without which principle, it need hardly be said, the true existence of the Family is impossible. So peculiar is this character, so difficult is it to ascertain its unity, and so important is its place in the drama, that we shall be justified in looking somewhat minutely at all the circumstances in which it has been placed by the poet.

First comes the long array of suitors, among whom were to be seen the nobility from every part of Europe—nay, even from Africa. The motive for this elaborate display, as we have before intimated, was to show the necessity of Bassanio's borrowing large sums of money to compete with these nobles, and also to exhibit Portia in all her dignity and splendor. But Portia has quite disregarded the outward glitter of wealth and rank, and has seemingly sought out a follower in the retinue of a lord instead of the lord himself—"a Venetian, a scholar, and a soldier, that came hither in the company of the Marquis of Montferrat." So at the outset we see that she cares naught for the External, but lays stress upon the Internal. The poet has thus given us an inkling of her inclination that we may not be in the dark about her choice. Moreover, we already know of the inclination of Bassanio from the very first scene of the play, and he too is aware of Portia's preference for himself. This point, then, let us carefully bear in mind, that the poet has already let us into the secret, unknown to the outside world, that Portia and Bassanio love one another, and that each one knows of the other's love. The two people, therefore, belong together; they alone can form a rational union, since they possess the absolute prerequisite of the Family, namely, reciprocal love.

Under ordinary circumstances nothing would remain but that the happy pair should go to the nearest church, and, in common parlance, have the knot tied. But to this blissful

consummation there is a great obstacle. Portia's father is dead, and has left a will which seems to bind her choice of a husband to a hopeless accident. Three caskets, made of gold, silver, and lead, respectively, are to be set before his daughter's suitors for selection, and that casket which contains her image carries with it her hand in marriage. Hence we find her lamenting in almost her first words that she cannot choose whom she would, nor refuse whom she disliked. But she recognizes the binding validity of the last request of her parent, and thus we have one of Shakespeare's favorite collisions, which may be stated as the Right of Choice against the will of the parent. Both sides have their validity, and it is just this validity of both sides which makes it a genuine collision. None will deny the right of the parent over the child, and this right was less circumscribed in former times than at present. But though the parent may no longer have any legal right, he has still the right of respect, and no child with a truly ethical feeling such as Portia undoubtedly possessed would withhold obedience. Such is the one side. But the other side is what we have termed the Right of Choice, or, in general terms, the Right of Subjectivity. This demands that the daughter should have absolutely the right of selecting her partner for life. She has to bear the responsibility of her choice, for she must live with him. The husband and wife constitute that unity called the Family: it is a unity of emotion; each party finds true life in the other. This emotion, by which both are melted together into one common existence, is called love. So if we have a true unity, or a true Family, there is the indispensable condition of love. Now it is just this important element that the will of Portia's father flings to the winds by exposing the choice of her to mere accident. It does not demand reciprocal love, which is the only basis of rational marriage. Such is the problem which Portia has to solve, and such is the mental conflict which we find her undergoing. Let us, then, carefully observe how she manages the matter.

All the suitors have taken their departure except two (not including Bassanio), who are more determined or less punctilious than the rest. The causes of this withdrawal are not given, but may be easily imagined; we may suppose they

were men of honor, and would refuse to acquire a wife by lot, to take the hand without the heart. Portia, too, may have shown in an unmistakable manner her dislikes, or, finally, they may have found the last condition too hard, viz. that they must swear never to woo another woman. Whatever the reason may have been, they all vanish after they had served the poet's purpose. But those who remain demand to have the caskets placed before them. The first one who goes through with the process of selection is the Prince of Morocco, who chooses by the outside appearance, and seems to rest his claim upon physical courage. He takes the golden casket, whose glitter typifies the brilliant exterior. Of course, such a choice is directly antagonistic to the character of Portia, and it is logically impossible that he can become her husband. The second one, the Prince of Arragon, chooses only to a certain extent by the outside, since he takes the silver casket, and he rests his claims upon merit. Now merit is a most excellent thing, but we all know that it can never supply the place of love. It is no uncommon occurrence that the more deserving are passed by and the less worthy are chosen, and who will say that it is not justifiable? Both Princes fail. Why? Because they lack the subjective element—love; at least, the love of Portia. For, as before stated, in order to form a true basis of the family relation, love must be reciprocal—each one must feel and find his or her own harmonious existence in the other. Rank, wealth, courage and merit are much in their places, but they can never be substituted for affection. Thus we see that the rejection of these suitors was not a mere fortuitous circumstance, but a logical necessity of the play.

Now comes Bassanio. He has both the requisite elements, loves and is loved; for the poet has carefully told us all this beforehand. We have no doubt of his success from the start. It is curious to trace the ethereal, almost imperceptible influences which the poet brings to bear upon Bassanio to determine his choice. First, his state of mind, all aglow with affection; no wonder that he disregards the exterior of things, for love is blind. Then Portia in the same condition, and giving expression to it in words; to which we may add, in imagination, her looks. Finally, the music, and the vague

hints of the song, until the feeling of internality is intensified to such a degree as to be irresistible. The very air seems to whisper in the ear of Bassanio, "Take the leaden casket," since it is the negation of all outside show and glitter. In it he finds the picture of Portia, a most fitting symbol of the internal nature of the characters of both Bassanio and Portia, as well as of their relation to one another—the image of the loved one imprinted on the heart. The same principle which causes the rejection of the two Princes must bring about the triumph of Bassanio. The moments of a rational marriage are now complete, Portia and Bassanio have all the elements of a true union. Such is undoubtedly the logic of the play. Thus the choice of caskets, which seemed to represent a horrible Chance about to crush out the rights of human nature, is spiritualized into the highest forms of freedom. Portia wins, and moreover wins through the very instruments which threatened her happiness, converts them to weapons for her own rescue. The choice exhibits the ends and motives of the chooser, and, in so far as these are finite and fall short of the Rational, failure results. In this sphere, namely, the unity which forms the basis of the marriage relation, the Rational is the Right of Subjectivity.

But does Portia really give any hint to Bassanio which of the caskets to choose? It will be recollected that it was forbidden her in her father's will to tell this secret. A suspicious circumstance is the introduction of a song during the choice of Bassanio, which the previous choosers did not have the benefit of. Hence one is inclined to scrutinize closely the meaning of this song. It is somewhat enigmatic, yet its general purport may be stated to be: "Don't choose by the eye, by the glittering outside, for it is the source of all delusion." Hence Portia, after observing with the greatest care all the formalities of her father's will, breaks it just at the point of its conflict with her subjective right. This is done so delicately by her that it is scarcely perceived; still it is none the less real. Thus she stands here as the grand bearer of the Right of Subjectivity in its special form of Love *versus* Obedience to the will of the parent.

We have already several times called attention to the fact that Shakespeare has been very careful to show the mutual

affection of both parties. These were the two that belonged together, and were bound to come together in spite of all obstacles. The two Princes exhibit various phases of conflict with this principle of love, which was finally to triumph. Otherwise the poem would be irrational, which in Art is the Ugly. Here we may note a distinction between Shakespeare and an inferior poet. The latter, instead of hedging Chance on all sides and making it the lowest possible factor, would have given it full scope. For he seeks dramatic effects by surprise. Shakespeare, on the contrary, always prepares, never surprises. He elaborates the motives and ends, and marches to their logical conclusion. We feel that so it is, and cannot be otherwise; the process has all the rigid necessity of Reason. But the novelist or playwright seeks to produce a "sensation" through unexpected turns and incidents. The true Artist, however, aims to have every action, and especially every crisis, properly *motived*—to use a German expression—and to banish accident altogether.

So ends the first part of Portia's career; she has solved the problem of marriage. Now a wholly new field awaits her. Up to this point (towards the end of the third act) the drama has produced three happy pairs of lovers, Portia and Bassanio, Nerissa and Gratiano, Jessica and Lorenzo, who are all brought together in the pleasant halls of Belmont, Portia's country-seat. But those very means which caused this blissful union have in another direction called forth a terrific collision. Suddenly upon this tender scene there lights the demon of ill news; word comes to Bassanio that his dearest friend Antonio, to whom he owes all his present happiness, is in imminent danger of being sacrificed by the Jew. It falls like a thunderbolt in their midst and scatters the company in every direction. Leaving Lorenzo and Jessica behind, they all quit Belmont at once, animated with one purpose—to rescue Antonio. Bassanio goes direct to his friend; Portia hits upon an indirect mode of procedure which need not be here detailed. The main point to be noticed is that Portia succeeds, Bassanio does not. This is specially emphasized by the poet: Bassanio with all his money, or rather her money, fails, while Portia is the chosen mediatrix. With what skill she fulfilled her mission has been shown in the previous

essay. It will be recollected that the collision which she is now called upon to mediate is there stated to be between Formal Law and what may be termed the Right of Mercy. Now it is essentially the same struggle through which Portia has just passed; she had been able to master the difficulty and assert her principle. Having thus gone through the fire herself, and knowing the frequent injustice of formal authority, she now sallies forth in defence of injured innocence. It is true that her father's will was enforced by prescription rather than by law. But it is the same principle fundamentally, and in both cases Portia steps forth as the champion of the Right of Subjectivity. It is confessed that Antonio is wholly innocent; he has not even willed, much less committed, any wrong, yet he is about to be sacrificed on the altar of legality. She comes, therefore, to cut the toils of the law when they have entangled a pure heart. It will thus be seen that she has been educated to meet just this crisis by her own experience.

But, however well fitted for the task she may be, there must be some motive to impel her forth. It has already been stated that, in the external course of the drama, Portia was the primal cause, or rather occasion, of Antonio's falling into the hands of the Jew. Bassanio needs money to carry on his courtship; he applies to his friend Antonio, who resorts to the Jew, and thus becomes his victim. Hence it is not at all out of place that she should become the instrument to make good the evil which she had unwittingly done. But when it is added that this same man was the dearest friend of her husband, and the chief means of her obtaining the one whom she loved, the motive must be for her all-powerful. Portia is a truly ethical character—she is one with her husband in feeling and interest. Her whole struggle hitherto has been in order that she might make a rational marriage, unite with the man of her heart. Anything, therefore, which affects him profoundly, must affect her in an equal degree, as she is an organic member of that unity called Family. Now Bassanio is so deeply attached to Antonio that he would even sacrifice his hard-won wife to effect the rescue of Antonio. It is this sympathy, this oneness of feeling with her husband, which impels her to undertake the difficult enterprise. The pang

which thrills his heart must pierce hers ; the impulse which drives him forth cannot leave her behind. That woman expressed unconsciously the deepest principle of her nature who said to her sick husband, "My dear, I have a pain in your breast."

But why should the mediatorial character be sustained by a woman? In this respect, also, we claim the poet is true to human nature. For it is just the subjective side of mind which is prominent in woman and distinguishes her from man, who lays much more stress upon the validity of the objective world. So strong is this tendency in him that he is apt to disregard the other element. Hence we see in the trial-scene that the judge and citizens are all on the side of Antonio, yet they quail before that objective reality called Law. By no means let it be understood that these remarks are directed against Law ; on the contrary, it is the greatest conservative power of humanity. But it has its limitations, and these we are insisting upon. Nor will it be denied that woman is the fittest person to plead for mercy, since it tallies so thoroughly with her subjective, emotional nature. So appropriate is all this that we feel that Portia never unsexes herself, nor even manifests any of the unlovely traits of strong-mindedness, though her adventures may well strike terror into any imitators.

Now, what is the secret of this characterization? Shakespeare has made Portia assume the most hazardous disguises and perform the boldest acts, acts from which any woman might well shrink ; and yet we feel that she is always womanly—nay, the most womanly of women. The great majority of Shakespeare's prominent female characters have one trait, however varied they may otherwise be: subordination to the Family. It is a devotion to husband, parent, child, lover ; they live but for one object—to be absorbed into the existence of another. By themselves, they feel that they are nothing ; only in the unity of feeling, interest and existence with another do they have any happiness in life. The complete cancellation of the individual through emotion, not consciously but instinctively, is the grand characteristic which Shakespeare gives to his women ; that is, to those whom he wishes to portray as good and dutiful. On the contrary, his

bad women are, for the most part, marked by quite the opposite of this quality. Such are the limits in which Shakespeare's female characters move. Now that just this trait forms the charm of woman few men will deny. Though wit, fancy, learning, may call forth admiration, there must be something quite different to subdue. It is not servitude, but the willing subordination to the higher end, self-sacrifice in its most exalted form. We believe that it is this consideration which makes us ever respect Portia; her motive is pure devotion to her husband, complete oneness with his interests and friendships, added no doubt to gratitude toward that man (Antonio) who has been chiefly instrumental in making her the happiest of mortals. For Antonio is a stranger to her, so far as we know; why should she assume the disguise and run the risk of an ignominious exposure and tarnished reputation? No; she has that complete harmony and unity with her husband, that his joys are her joys, his sorrows her sorrows, and she has the same interest in her husband's friend as the husband himself. Thus she is a truly ethical character, ethical in the sense that she instinctively subordinates herself to the highest end of woman.

Such is the motive which impels Portia forth to the rescue of Antonio. Just here occurs the seeming contradiction in her character. Hitherto she has asserted boldly and strongly her individual rights; she has trampled upon custom and even law when they have stood in the way of her purposes. But the moment she is united with Bassanio, all is changed. She yields up her whole being to another, who is, of course, equally devoted to her; this daring and resolute will is now at peace and submissive; and her expression of subordination is as absolute as language can make it:

—— “though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet for you
I would be trebled twenty-times myself. . . .
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted; but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen of myself, and even now, but now
This house, these servants, and this same myself,
Are yours, my lord.”

Now what is the solution of these contradictory traits? *Portia insists upon the subjective principle only in order that her union with her husband may be more complete.* She has struggled for the Right of Choice. To what end? Since the oneness of the marriage-tie is based upon emotion, she insists that emotion in this sphere must have absolute validity. Every hindrance must be set aside; the more intense and unobstructed the affection, the more perfect the bond of unity. Thus she has asserted her individuality with the single purpose that her subordination might in the end be more complete, and that her marriage might be truer and more rational.

A great many persons are inclined to rebel at this sudden swallowing up of individuality, and at the first glance it does seem a hard destiny. Yet it will require but little examination of the actual world to discover that all true living is coupled with just such abnegation of self, indeed that life would otherwise be impossible. Goethe in his later writings has often laid much stress upon the Renunciation of the Individual; and the great poets, philosophers, and moralists, in their own different ways, have repeated the same lesson. To live for a universal end is not merely desirable but necessary, and forms the basis of moral action. All organization, society, state, demand the subordination of particular ends, motives, and desires; otherwise institutions of every kind would be quite impossible. The truth is, the individual would perish through his own self-contradiction were he not subsumed. So the family organism requires the same renunciation from man and woman; both must sacrifice their self-will and submit themselves to the higher end. In fact, love is the emotional, and hence unconscious and unwilling cancellation of the individual; it means that a person finds his whole happiness, indeed even his existence, not in himself but in another. It is from these considerations that we perceive Portia's character to be a harmonious Whole, springing from one central thought, and true in the profoundest sense to human nature. Portia thus stands as the type of the rational woman, rational in what she resists and in what she accepts, rational in rebellion and in submission. She is a strong character, yet not strong-minded in the special sense of this term; she

withers not, like a delicate flower, at the first rude blast, but maintains her individual right till to yield becomes duty.

The remaining characters need not be long dwelt upon. Bassanio is made worthy of Portia by his devotion to his friend, and she perceives him to be a true man. He is even ready to sacrifice his new bride on the altar of friendship, through which alone he has gained her. Bassanio is the means by which Antonio has come into difficulty; Bassanio's prosperity has been Antonio's adversity, but he is willing to forego it all for the sake of the friend to whom his good luck is owing. Thus his devotion is complete, every shade of selfishness is stripped off, and we behold the worthy husband of Portia. Gratiano and Nerissa serve chiefly as mirrors for the leading characters to reflect motives, thoughts, and sentiments. They have little distinct individuality, yet are very necessary to show other persons. Nerissa does little but exhibit her mistress, and the same function is performed for Antonio by Solanio and Solarino. One of the under-currents of the play, which however soon mingles with the main stream, is the story of Jessica, the daughter of the Jew. Here again we have the assertion of the right of choice against the will of the parent, the same collision as Portia's. But it is in a wholly different soil and atmosphere, and hence the fruit is different. Portia respects all the formalities of her deceased father's testament; Jessica tramples without scruple upon all the commands and prejudices of a living father, and steals his money besides. Portia's father was said to have been wise and just; we know the character of Shylock, and what his daughter's education must have been. Hence the great difference in the moral character of the two children. The same collision occurs in the clown Gobbo, but in a form so low, so devoid of content, that it becomes ridiculous—in fact, a burlesque. It appears here as duty to a master who starves and abuses against the right of running away. Gobbo succeeds, after a subtle piece of argumentation, in reconciling his conscience with his desire, and then takes to his heels. Thus in Portia, Jessica, and Gobbo, there is seen a gradation of the same collision.

The fourth act terminates the leading collision of the play, that between Shylock and Antonio. The one has been pun-

ished, the other rescued. Why, then, is the fifth act added? It is because the minor complications, which are brought about by the leading collision and form a necessary element of it, are not yet solved. Portia and Bassanio have been violently separated, likewise Gratiano and Nerissa, by the main struggle; when this is at an end, there is no longer cause for separation; but they must quickly rebound to their former union, which is their only rational existence. Hence the return, which is the theme of the fifth act, is a logical moment of the whole drama. If there be mediation, it must be complete in every part. Moreover, Bassanio and Gratiano are as yet ignorant of the share their wives have had in accomplishing the great mediatorial act. To be sure, we, the audience, or the reader, know all about the matter, but it is certainly not our duty to supply the missing elements of a work of art. If such were the case, the greatness of the poem would depend upon the greatness of the hearer or reader; that is, his ability to make it perfect. In short, a drama, or any work of art, must be complete in itself, an Objective Whole, not dependent upon anybody to supply its omissions, and the characters must be intelligible not merely to us but to one another. Hence the fifth act may be called the Return; the characters pass out of the realm of difference and contradiction into the world of harmony. It opens with an idyllic strain which at once ushers us into the nature of the place; we are now in the land of love; Lorenzo and Jessica in responsive song celebrate the heroes and heroines of romantic devotion. Next the sweet strains of music arise, the language of emotion and harmony. So there is diffused over the whole scene the atmosphere of love and concord. Finally, the parties return separately from their struggle into the land of harmony; the rescued Antonio is there as the mark of triumph. The difficulty about the rings is only temporary; their hearts are right, and that is the main thing; for it would ill become Portia, after her crusade against the most weighty formalities, to insist upon the formality of a ring. Even the ships return to smooth over the last trouble; and the concord is perfect when the story of the disguise is told. It is worth noticing that Shakespeare has here localized his themes; the abode of quiet is at a distance from the place of strife; so

Belmont is the land of Harmony and Love, which they leave in the hour of struggle, and to which they come back in the hour of peace. This may be a violation of that critical canon which demands Unity of Place, but it is a rule which Shakespeare very often follows, and which it would not be difficult to justify.

To sum up in a few words our results. The collision is between Antonio and Shylock, and is mediated by Portia. Its logical basis is the contradiction between the Objective as realized in the institutions of Reason and the Subjective, or the individual side of man. The former undertakes to crush the latter, through which alone it had existence, for it is posited by the Subjective; hence it becomes contradictory of itself and is negated. The Subjective, since it is not universal, is in its turn a new self-contradiction, and hence a negation of itself, which results in its subsuming itself under the Objective. So Portia asserts subjectivity only to end in subordinating herself to one of the forms of objective reality—the Family.

The external movement of the drama may be divided into three parts: 1. The Union; 2. The Separation; 3. The Return. Each of these parts is determined and complemented by the others. The Union, by which is meant the bringing together of the three pairs, has produced the collision between Antonio and Shylock, which then returns and dissolves it, for this Union cannot consistently destroy the one who brought it about. Hence the second step, the Separation, results necessarily from the first. But the parties must overcome this diremption, for they are rationally united, and the collision itself must be mediated; hence the obstacles are removed, and there follows the third stage of the movement, namely, the Return. This when completed is the same as the first Union, but with the collision which was involved in it harmonized. Here the play must end; no further action is possible. Or, to take more abstract terms, we may express these three stages as Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis. That this movement is a type of the movement of Reason itself, needs not to be told to the Thinker. Every spiritual process involves the same moments, and a work of Art as the child of imaginative Reason must bear the image of the parent.